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April 2008

# Live Web Usability Lab

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# Live Web Usability Lab

April 28, 2008

## Connecticut Library Association

- **Stephanie Willen Brown**, electronic resources librarian, the University of Connecticut
- **Steve Cauffman**, reQuest ILL coordinator, iCONN
- **Carol Abatelli**, head of collections & electronic resource management, Eastern Connecticut State University



Session based on

Marty, Paul F. and Michael Twidale, "Usability@90mph: Presenting and Evaluating a New, High-Speed Method for Demonstrating User Testing in Front of an Audience."

*FirstMonday*. July, 2005:

[http://www.firstmonday.org/issues/issue10\\_7/marty/](http://www.firstmonday.org/issues/issue10_7/marty/)





## Paul Marty:

“... only a small amount of time is necessary to **demonstrate** ... that the **best way to evaluate an interface** for usability is to **test** that interface with **representative users.**”


Marty, Paul + Michael Twidale, “Usability@90mph” *FirstMonday*, 2005



Please identify the woman  
on the next slide.

Session will not continue until  
you have identified her.

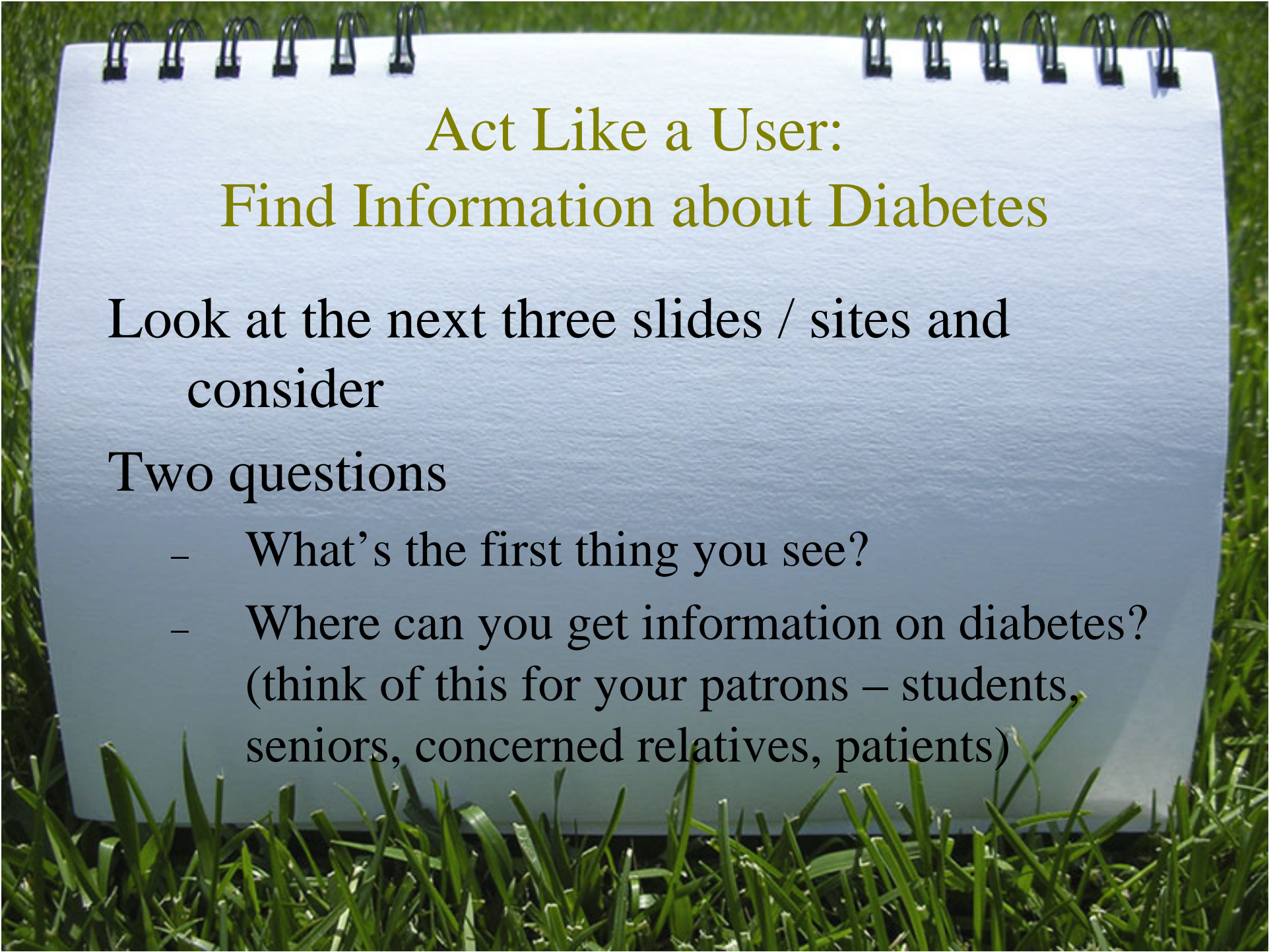




Are you still waiting?  
It's **Lydia Maria Child**, 1802-1880.  
Abolitionist and supporter of the  
Underground Railroad.

Frustrated? That's how our users feel!  
We make them answer a question  
that makes **NO SENSE** to them before  
we let them continue





## Act Like a User: Find Information about Diabetes

Look at the next three slides / sites and  
consider

Two questions

- What's the first thing you see?
- Where can you get information on diabetes?  
(think of this for your patrons – students,  
seniors, concerned relatives, patients)





University of Texas Libraries

SEARCH:

Library Web Site

GO

see all choices

About the Libraries

Research Tools

Library Services

Resources for You

## Quicklinks

Library Catalog

Libraries, Centers, and  
Museums

Access Electronic Reserves

Ask a Librarian

Request: an Interlibrary  
Loan | a Purchase

Renew Books

Support Your Libraries



for Students

**My Blackboard**

**Library Classes:**  
Catalog, Google and  
more

**IM a Librarian**

**Find a place to  
study**

**Find articles**

[MORE for Undergrads](#)  
[MORE for Grad](#)

for Faculty/Staff

**Integrating the  
Library into  
Blackboard**

**Open Access  
Publishing and  
Other Scholarly  
Communication  
Issues**

**Request a library  
instruction session**

**Library Classes  
(Catalog, Google,**

Google Scholar



Search for  
peer-reviewed papers,  
theses, books,  
preprints, abstracts  
and technical reports.  
**On-campus users,  
search here:**

Search

[Off-campus users, go  
to Google Scholar](#)

News



**National Library Week**  
is April 13-19. Since  
1958, libraries  
throughout the  
country have  
celebrated the role of  
libraries in our culture  
during one week in

Featured Resource

**scitopia.org**

**Scitopia** This database  
provides a federated  
search portal for 15  
leading science and  
technology societies.  
[MORE about Scitopia](#)

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**"Fresh City Life:  
Wild Wilde West"**  
New Events and Classes  
Starting Soon!

**Fresh City Life:  
Wild Wilde West**

**Denver Public Library News**

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- ☐ [New Fresh City Life: Wild Wilde West](#)
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**Live News Feeds**

[Wholesale prices soared in March \(AP\)](#)

[Yahoo! News: Top Stories](#)  
Tue, 15 Apr 2008 12:47:54 GMT

[A Living Memorial After Virginia Tech](#)

[NYT > U.S.](#)  
Tue, 15 Apr 2008 12:10:23 GMT

[Berlusconi to target immigrant crime in Italy](#)


[Reuters: International News](#)  
Tue, 15 Apr 2008 09:13:17 -0400

[Trial Postponed For Same-Sex Couple's Protest](#)

[cbs4denver.com](#)  
Apr 15 2008 5:37AM

[Today In History - April 15, 2008](#)  
[cbs4denver.com](#)

Apr 7 2008 9:00AM

 [DPL RSS](#) | [More News](#)

<http://denverlibrary.org>



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News **New UO Portland Library and Learning Commons Reflects Exciting Ch...** + [Read More >>](#)

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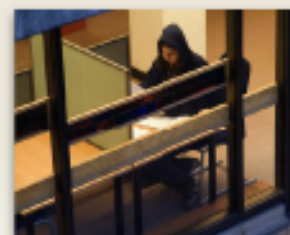
Entire Collection

Search

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## Did you know?



You can teach yourself to play like a jazz great by borrowing a play-along jazz recording in the Douglass Listening Room?...

[+ Learn More >>](#)

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# What *\*is\** Usability?

Usability ... assesses **how easy user interfaces are to use**. The word “usability” also refers to **methods for improving ease-of-use during** the design process.

Jakob Nielsen, Usability 101



# Components of Usability

## Goals

- Learnability
- Efficiency
- Memorability
- Error recovery
- Satisfaction

## Achieved by ...

- Thinking like a user
- Consistency
- Tweaking text



# Thinking Like a User

- “... let’s acknowledge the vital importance of **empathy for the user**. Only by understanding and caring about the perspective of the individual can we design useful, usable solutions.”

- Peter Morville, Ambient Findability



# Consistency

- Color, graphics
- Orientation & navigation
- Language



Yipes!

Why was that screen so different?

It had a point:  
don't change the look-n-feel  
without a good reason  
Users will notice and wonder.



# Reading Online is Like ??

## Reading Proust

- People like to read long sentences online because it's easy to keep your place, follow complex trains of thought, and flip to the next screen of dense text.

or

## Skimming citations

- People skim titles & abstracts for keywords, take notes, and move to the next citation



# Reading Online ... Proust

For a long time I used to go to bed early. Sometimes, when I had put out my candle, my eyes would close so quickly that I had not even time to say "I'm going to sleep." And half an hour later the thought that it was time to go to sleep would awaken me; I would try to put away the book which, I imagined, was still in my hands, and to blow out the light; I had been thinking all the time, while I was asleep, of what I had just been reading, but my thoughts had run into a channel of their own, until I myself seemed actually to have become the subject of my book: a church, a quartet, the rivalry between Francois I and Charles V. This impression would persist for some moments after I was awake; it did not disturb my mind, but it lay like scales upon my eyes and prevented them from registering the fact that the candle was no longer burning. Then it would begin to seem unintelligible, as the thoughts of a former existence must be to a reincarnate spirit; the subject of my book would separate itself from me, leaving me free to choose whether I would form part of it or no; and at the same time my sight would return and I would be astonished to find myself in a state of darkness, pleasant and restful enough for the eyes, and even more, perhaps, for my mind, to which it appeared incomprehensible, without a cause, a matter dark indeed.

Swann's Way / Marcel Proust



# Reading Online ... Skimming Citations

Refine Search Search History/Alerts Results

All Results: 1-10 of 284 Page: 1 [2](#) [3](#) [4](#) [5](#) [Next](#) Sort by: Date [Add \(1-10\)](#)

<b>Narrow Results by Subject</b> <a href="#">Academic Achievement</a> <a href="#">Black Students</a> <a href="#">Racial Differences</a> <a href="#">White Students</a> <a href="#">Hispanic American Students</a> <a href="#">Elementary Secondary Education</a> <a href="#">Educational Attainment</a> <a href="#">Minority Group Children</a> <a href="#">Poverty</a> <a href="#">Equal Education</a>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <a href="#">Using Technology to Teach Developmental African-American Algebra Students</a> . By: Walker, Sandra; Senger, Elizabeth. Journal of Computers in <b>Mathematics</b> and Science Teaching, v26 n3 p217-231 Jul 2007. (EJ766513) <a href="#">UConn Links</a> <a href="#">UConn Links</a></li><li>2. <a href="#">Beating the Odds: An Analysis of Student Performance and Achievement Gaps on State Assessments. Results from the 2005-2006 School Year</a> . By: Council of the Great City Schools, Washington, DC.. Council of the Great City Schools. 2007 30 pp. (ED498835) <a href="#">Full Text from ERIC</a> <a href="#">UConn Links</a> <a href="#">UConn Links</a></li><li>3. <a href="#">Beyond Missionaries or Cannibals: Who Should Teach Mathematics to African American Children?</a> . By: Martin, Danny Bernard. High School Journal, v91 n1 p6-28 Oct-Nov 2007. (EJ777994) <a href="#">UConn Links</a> <a href="#">UConn Links</a></li><li>4. <a href="#">The Truth about Students of Color and Standardized Tests</a> . By: Thompson, Gail L.. Leadership, v36 n3 p22-26, 38 Jan-Feb 2007. (EJ771720) <a href="#">PDF Full Text</a></li></ol>	<a href="#">Add</a> <a href="#">Add</a> <a href="#">Add</a> <a href="#">Add</a>
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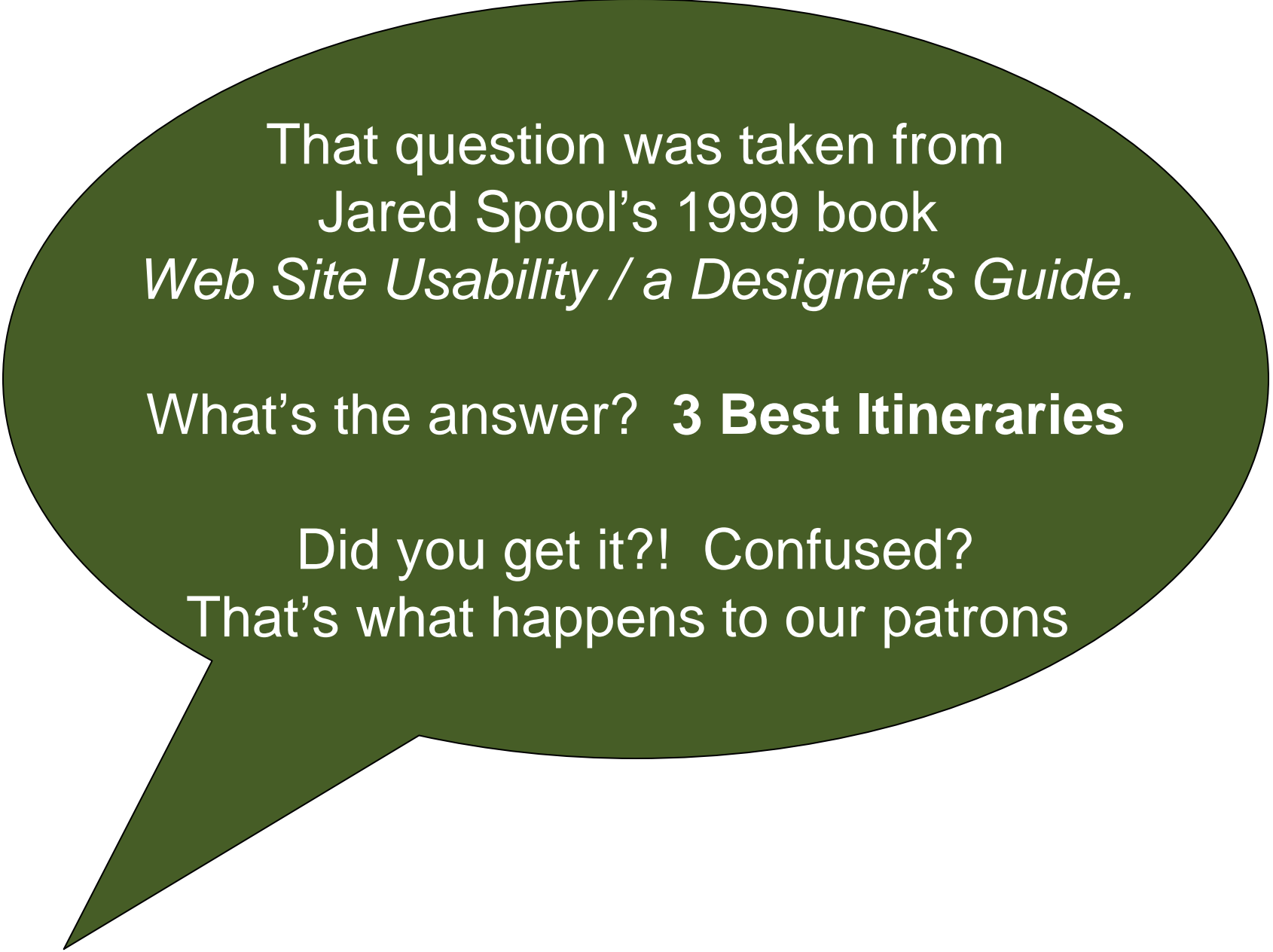
ERIC search: African Americans & mathematics



# Jargon for Librarians

- On **travelocity** you need the cheapest round-trip ticket from Boston to London.
- These are your options – which is right?
  - Flights & Prices
  - Fares
  - 3 Best Itineraries





That question was taken from  
Jared Spool's 1999 book  
*Web Site Usability / a Designer's Guide.*

What's the answer? **3 Best Itineraries**

Did you get it?! Confused?  
That's what happens to our patrons

# Library Jargon to Students

- “ERIC, I think it’s some kind of journal ... some kind of citation.”
- Reference Shelf “[It’s] very general. You don’t know what to expect as it could be anything.”

We must be very careful of **jargon!** Think of that Gary Larson cartoon, where all the dog hears is her name, Ginger



# Usability Testing

- Define users
- Design questions to mimic what users would realistically do
- Do usability testing early & often
  - 3-5 users highlights 85% of errors
  - Better to test several small groups than 10-15 at once
- Note errors, redesign and retest



# Volunteer Required

- Anyone who hasn't used iCONN?
- Willing to answer questions about iCONN in front of your peers?!
- Carol will explain the usability testing process
- Steve will
  - Demonstrate iCONN
  - Describe the usability test questions



## @ iCONN

- Union Catalog (reQuest)
- Licensed databases
- Authentication
- Federated searching



# Usability Test Questions

- Login to iCONN site
- Find the book *7th Heaven* by James Patterson. Does your library own it? If your library doesn't own the book, how would you get it?
- Find a recent article on global warming.
- Find a table of contents for *Consumer Reports*.
- Choose a resource that lets you search your family history.

# Live Test @ iCONN

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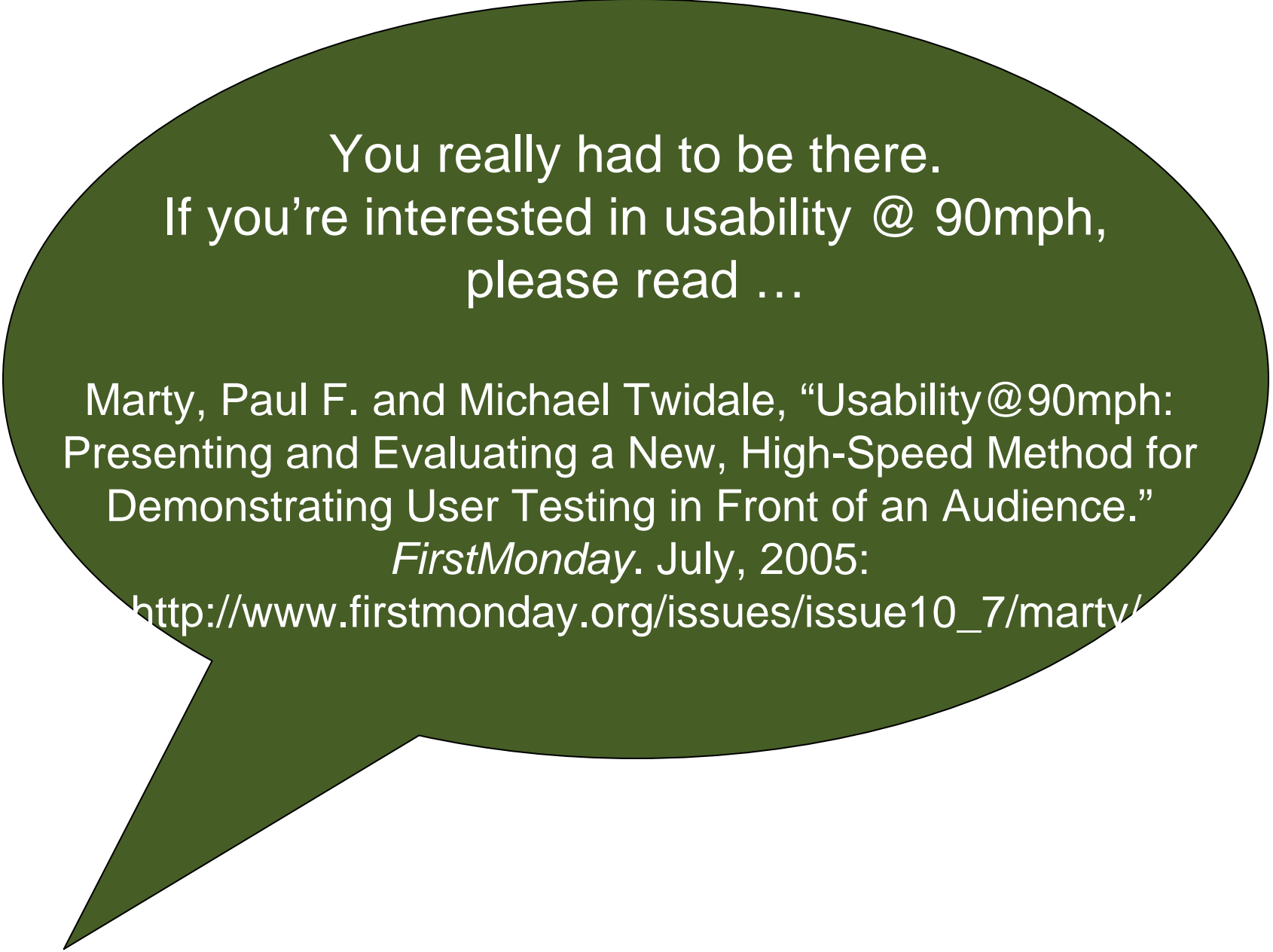
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You really had to be there.  
If you're interested in usability @ 90mph,  
please read ...

Marty, Paul F. and Michael Twidale, "Usability@90mph:  
Presenting and Evaluating a New, High-Speed Method for  
Demonstrating User Testing in Front of an Audience."

*FirstMonday*. July, 2005:

[http://www.firstmonday.org/issues/issue10\\_7/marty/](http://www.firstmonday.org/issues/issue10_7/marty/)

# For More Information

- Recommended articles about usability testing
  - <http://gslis.simmons.edu/mw/browns/Usability#Links>
- SlideShare of this PowerPoint
  - <http://www.slideshare.net/CogSciLibrarian/cla-usability-2008/>

## My Slideshows



[Live Usability Lab @ Conn Lib Ass'n, April 28, 2008...](#)



## Questions? Keep in Touch

- Stephanie Willen Brown, electronic resources librarian, the University of Connecticut  
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- Steve Cauffman, reQuest ILL coordinator, iCONN  
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- Carol Abatelli, head of collections & electronic resource management, Eastern Connecticut State University  
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